

[How Snakey Joe Got His Name]

Miller [?]

Folklore

NOV 14 1936 Cowboy Folkstuff - Range Lore

Howard County

District 18.

Mrs. J. O. Miller—P. W.

Dist. 18. Wordage 460

241 Page 1. S. 241 "HOW SNAKEY JOE GOT HIS NAME

As Related By: [Red Wiggins?], 60 odd year old wandering cowpuncher.

Related to: Mrs. J. O. Miller.

Date: September, 1936.

Place: Big Spring, Texas.

Some cowboys were working on the Read Ranch in 1900, which lies in the Eastern part of Howard County, where the Rattlesnake and Wild Horse Mountains loom against the horizon.

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These cowboys were very busy making ready for a fall roundup of several thousand head of three-year old steers and to do some branding of the calves. Red and Joe started to catch their mounts, which were Spanish pintoes.

“Well”, said Joe, “ where did the wrangler stake our ponies? Look! the hobbles are broken.”

Taking his lasso, he started to find his horse. Not watching very carefully where he stepped, he stepped in a prairie dog cell and was bitten by a rattler on the ankle. The warning rattle of the snake did not attract his attention. Not having a first-aid kit with him he gave it a generous dose of tobacco juice, and trusting it to Lady Luck went on his way after his horse. Becoming tired and worried about his accident, he sat down to meditate upon the situation. However, not noticing where he chose to sit, the mate of the other rattler was underneath him. After a few minutes of relaxation, he got up and, deciding that he was not seriously hurt, made another attempt to catch the pony, while the snake, all unknown, dangled from the seat of his trousers. Finally after a rather strenuous chase, he succeeded in catching the cayuse. Picking his saddle and tossing it on the horse and tightening the girth with a final click, he started to mount, but that was another question. The horse scented the snake and would not stand. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas The snake in its mad scramble trying to loose its entangled fangs made itself felt by its [?] weight . Joe looked around and saw it.

“WOW”! and loudly cursing, he threw up his hands trying to hold the reins in one hand and with the other, locate the trouble, all the while running in circles

His pal Red stood watching him, dying with laughter, throwing his sombrero in the air, and enjoying the sight. Seeing Joe had almost become exhausted and the frightened horse had begun to trample him, Red made two long jumps and grabbed the snake by one hand, and the horse with the other and separated the trio.

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The time had passed and noon-hour had arrived. While seated around the campfire, with the branding irons sizzling in the fire, they were served the famous dish of son-of-a-gun and black coffee as Red related the morning incident. All eyes and laughter turned toward Joe, crying "Snakey Joe!"